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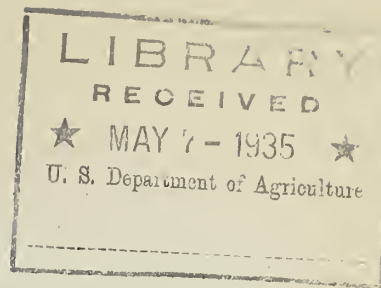
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HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

Graded and Dated Eggs



A radio interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman, Bureau of Home Economics, and Mr. Morse Salisbury, Radio Service, broadcast Thursday, April 25, 1935, in the Department of Agriculture period, National Farm and Home Hour, by NBC and a network of 50 associate radio stations.

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MR. SALISBURY: Miss Van Deman, what ho on your Household Calendar today?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Eggs! I'm dedicating the Household Calendar to eggs today.

MR. SALISBURY: Hen fruit!

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes, sir, hen fruit, in good old barnyard vernacular.

MR. SALISBURY: Well, what hot on eggs, the fruit of the industrious hen?

MISS VAN DEMAN: Lots of things. Grading of eggs. Dated eggs. Eggs with white shells. Eggs with brown shells. Eggs in meringues. Eggs in custards.

MR. SALISBURY: Sounds to me as though you're compiling an encyclopedia on eggs.

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, not quite. But I've been talking to a walking encyclopedia-- Mr. Rob Slocum in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. I certainly found out more than I ever knew before about the marketing of eggs.

MR. SALISBURY: For instance.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Well, this question of Government grades on eggs. Lately I've been noticing more and more advertisements in the papers, saying "U. S. Government Graded and Dated" eggs. Then in smaller type, underneath, I've noticed these words: "U.S. Standards, Large," or "U. S. Extras, Medium." And sometimes there's been another line saying "Retail Grade A" or "Retail Grade B."

MR. SALISBURY: Just what do all those words mean?

MISS VAN DEMAN: That's exactly what I asked Mr. Slocum. I told him I want to be an intelligent consumer, and I asked him to educate me. And this is what he said, some of it.

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When you buy a carton of eggs in the grocery store and find that it is sealed with a sticker called a "certificate of quality," it means just this. Every egg in that carton was candled in an egg warehouse. That is, it was put before a bright light in a dark room and looked at by a person who understands how an egg should look inside its shell with the light shining through it. As each egg was candled, it was graded in conformity with certain standards set up by the Government egg people working in cooperation with the State departments of agriculture. For instance, here in Washington, we often see on these certificates of quality, the name of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, and along with it the Virginia or the Maryland State Department, depending of course on what was the home State of the hens that laid the eggs in that carton.

MR. SALISBURY: How many different grades of eggs are there in the retail trade? U. S. Government grades, I mean.

MISS VAN DEMAN: The Bureau of Agricultural Economics has drawn up quality specifications for four retail grades. They call them U. S. Specials, U. S. Extras, U. S. Standards, and U. S. Trades. Personally, I wish they'd call them Grades A, B, C, and D, or Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4.

MR. SALISBURY: Yes, it is pretty hard to remember whether "specials" or "extras" come at the top.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I certainly find it so. "U. S. Specials," Mr. Slocum tells me, are the top of the top. About a double A quality. You don't meet many eggs marked "U. S. Specials" in the grocery store. "U. S. Extras" are also A quality and they're good enough to suit most anybody. You can poach them or soft-cook them. An egg that can stand the poaching test is a mighty good egg. It needs a firm white that holds up well around a firm well-rounded yolk, if it's to come out of the poaching pan in good style.

MR. SALISBURY: "U. S. Standards" I take it must be about B grade then--the quality of most market eggs.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Yes. That's what Mr. Slocum says. U. S. Standards are perfectly all right for ordinary cooking purposes and for scrambling and making custards and omelets and dishes like that.

MR. SALISBURY: What about dated eggs? Does the date on a carton of eggs mean the day they were laid?

MISS VAN DEMAN: No, not at all. If you see April 25 on a carton of U. S. graded eggs, that means the day they were graded and sealed in that carton under the "certificate of quality." That date doesn't mean the day the hens deposited those eggs in the nest. But this is what's happening, Mr. Slocum tells me. Stores that sell graded dated eggs are so proud of the quality of their eggs that they are handling them with great speed and dispatch. Oftentimes these high quality graded eggs are only four or five days old, sometimes less, when they reach the consumer.

MR. SALISBURY: Here's another question, Miss Van Deman. You used the words "Large" and "Medium" after some of these egg grades. Does that mean they're sorted for size? No little banty eggs along with the big fellows?

MISS VAN DEMAN: It certainly does. The Bureau of Agricultural Economics says that a dozen eggs called "Large" should weigh 24 ounces. The "Mediums" tip the scales at 20-1/2 ounces, and "Smalls" at 17 ounces.

MR. SALISBURY: That's a pretty fine distinction for me. An egg's an egg on my breakfast plate if it's fresh and if it's cooked right.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Fried right, did you say?

MR. SALISBURY: You're a mind reader. Yes, I want my eggs fried and I want 'em fried on both sides. "Two and over" as the hash house boys say. But I thought you were going to talk about lady-like meringues and custards?

MISS VAN DEMAN: I was, but this grading story was longer than I thought. It will have to be "continued in our next." In the meantime if anybody wants our leaflet called "Eggs at Any Meal" just drop me a post card and address it to the Bureau of Home Economics in Washington. And goodbye until next time.

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